From: Jeff Ober
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/9/01 6:02pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Hi, I have been reading a lot about some of the proposed ideas for the MS settlement. I am a student and use several different operating systems on several different computers. I am not a Microsoft supporter, but I do not think that mandating that they develop their office applications for other OSs, such as Linux and Unix variants. This would be a punishment rather than a regulation that would help competition. They would be spending a lot of money on development for this, but no one would ever buy the product. Linux users are extremely against purchasing products, especially from closed source projects, but very especially from Microsoft. I would think a better solution would be to require them to open source their document formats, such as the MS Word .doc format, so that other office programs that are already ported/made for linux/unix variants could become more compatible with MS Office. Because of MS Office's dominance in the business world, their closed source document formats make using OSs other than Windows impracticle in any situation other than an entirely non-windows environment. If the .doc format (and other Office formats) were open to projects like www.openoffice.org, these office suites would become more viable for companies and users, even in a primarilly Windows-based environment. Because of this, I think that this would be the most pro-competitive solution to this problem.

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